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“THE MARQUIS DE LA FAYETTE IN THE AMERICAN
REVOLUTION.”¹

BY CHARLES J. STILLÉ.

There are few men who have been so differently judged as La Fayette. In this country, ever since he, as a boy of nineteen years, offered himself to Mr. Deane, in 1776, to serve “the United States with all possible zeal, without any pension or particular allowance,” down through a most stormy career to the period when, fifty years later, he made, as the nation’s guest, a triumphal progress through the country, his career built up a reputation as bright and unsullied as that of any man in our history. He is to us the typical leader of the new era in human progress which was then dawning on the world as opposed to the *ancien régime*. Americans have never lost their faith in him, and feel more and more that, owing to his peculiar position, he

¹ “The Marquis de La Fayette in the American Revolution: with Some Account of the Attitude of France toward the War of Independence.” By Charlemagne Tower, Jr., LL.D. In two volumes. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1895.

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was one of the great heroes of the struggle for independence whom we should delight to honor. The history of the last half of this century is filled with the names of revolutionary leaders, men like Kossuth or Garibaldi, and the like, whose highest aim was to rescue their own country from oppression ; but, so far as we know, it tells us of no one who freely exposed his life and property in defence of the great cause of human freedom itself, while he was a perfect stranger to those in whose cause he fought. We have always felt in this country, therefore, a special pride in the career of this man, the smallest portion of whose life, after all, was passed here, for we have felt that the inspiration which made his career so illustrious in Europe was derived from his fellowship with our own countrymen, and especially from following the advice and counsel of his great friend, Washington.

But when we reflect upon his career we are sometimes apt to forget the discipline of the struggle through which he passed here before he went back capable, in the opinion of the best judges, of leading in any movement which might be undertaken for the regeneration of France. He came to us a mere boy, of a vivacious temperament, ready to command and willing to outrank veterans who had grown up in the service of their country, and yet the cool, keen insight of Washington saw in him from the beginning the making of a general. He was not merely a stranger with an imperfect knowledge of our language, but he was a Frenchman and a Catholic at a time when no more disqualifying stigma could be affixed to any man who offered his services as a military officer ; but he had not long served in our army before he became in the eyes of the sternest Puritan and the most peace-loving Quaker not so much a great military hero as a man imbued with virtues which do not usually characterize military heroes. He seemed to our fathers throughout the war of the Revolution to be a man pre-eminently endowed with those qualities which are conspicuous in heroes of a very different kind. He was always regarded here as the type of self-sac-

rifice, with an intense earnestness of desire to aid the cause which he had espoused, and with a readiness to undertake any duty, however arduous, to which he might be assigned by the General-in-Chief. He was recognized on all hands not merely as a Marquis, although his social position in France had not been forgotten, but as a man fighting for “an idea,” as the modern phrase is; restrained, however, at all times by the sober wisdom of Washington from that extravagance of opinion and obtrusiveness of manner which was then thought characteristic of a young man and a Frenchman. While he felt that a revolution was necessary here to insure certain fundamental rights, he knew perfectly well that such a revolution must be a very different proceeding from that which might be needed in such a country as feudal France. It is mainly for this reason that La Fayette’s career in this country becomes so interesting. We desire to know why and how a man of his peculiar temperament came to help us, how he seemed to inspire all those who surrounded him with the fullest confidence, and how and why, before he left us, he was recognized not only as one of the most devoted patriots in our ranks, but one of our most distinguished generals.

The same sympathy which his character and actions excited here has not been felt by historical writers in his own country. In the French Revolution he was as much of a leader,—more so, indeed, than he had been here. In the early days of that great convulsion he was the commander of the National Guard,—that military force which he had created,—which delayed, at least, the fearful excesses which took place when La Fayette was removed. He was the author of that celebrated constitutional law, the basis of all reorganization of government on a liberal basis on the continent of Europe in modern times, a sort of French Bill of Rights called “*Droits de l’homme et du citoyen.*” In short, he may be called almost the absolute ruler of France from the day on which the King and Queen were dragged from Versailles to Paris in October, 1789, to the day on which the mob assailed and murdered their guard at the Tuileries

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in August, 1792. He was not merely the leader of those who desired to abolish the oppression of feudal rule in France, but he was the head of a powerful party—at least in the early days of the Revolution—which sought to achieve its purpose by peaceable and constitutional means rather than by violent revolutionary force. He was in no sense an extremist; and, as the mass of the population were disposed to accomplish their ends by violent measures, if necessary, he was hated by extremists on both sides, and hence his reputation suffered both among those who defended the old order and those who strove to establish the new. He was no friend to the King, it was said, for he did not rescue him from the mob when he was in its power. He was still less a friend of the ultra-revolutionary party, for he abandoned his country when it had fallen into their hands. La Fayette in France tried to assume the impossible rôle of a moderate when all around him were roused by revolutionary fury to the wildest excesses. Of course we cannot look to French critics for the same admiring sympathy which is freely bestowed by our own countrymen on the character and career of this young knight. His reputation has indeed always been at all times at the mercy of party champions. According to one set of critics he was, as I have said, a betrayer of his King, a perfect hypocrite, the merest trimmer in his political opinions and acts, and so fond of hearing his own praises that he found a certain consolation in breaking his leg, because it enabled him to talk freely of himself to every one. To another set of writers, and those claiming to be his friends, he was a mere sentimentalist, incapable of leading a revolution, not fit for its rough work, and too timid to grasp at the fruitful results of the principles he avowed as guiding his political conduct.

To them he becomes a politician rather than a hero. To Americans who are jealous of the glory of La Fayette, and who feel certain that he was a star of the first magnitude when he shone in our firmament, some trustworthy account of his career in this country—not in defence, but in the way of commemoration and illustration of his career here—seems

very desirable. So to some there may be needed an explanation of certain acts in his later life which seem of doubtful expediency, and to all something of the genesis of a great man whom our Revolution first made conspicuous. We would like to know how a boy of nineteen had sufficiently mastered the problem of constitutional liberty as to be willing to give up all in its defence; how he shunned with great care the propagation of the unhistoric theories of government which were then fashionable in France, but to us *monstrum horrendum*; how it happened that he became, from the time he first met Washington, his life-long friend; how it was that, when confined in the dungeon at Olmütz, he never hesitated to preach the doctrine of self-government, even when the power was in the hands of the Jacobins. We want to know whether what were intended to be the kind words of Charles X., spoken in 1829 of La Fayette, had any true foundation. “Of all the men,” said the King, “I have ever known during a long life, myself and La Fayette are the only persons who have never changed their political opinions.”

For these reasons we look upon a new account of the life of La Fayette, derived from authentic sources, and especially of that portion of it which was passed in the service of this country, with great interest. We need a clear statement as to how far that service was aided or discouraged by the French government, and for what reasons. Of late the reputation of La Fayette in France, now that he has lain in his grave sixty years, has approached more nearly to what we suppose it always has been here. We have now, thanks to the desire of France to claim her due share in the success of the war of independence, an opportunity of giving to La Fayette some of the credit which is due to his illustrious career; we have now access to a full presentation of the case taken from the government archives,—a source quite free, we may suppose, from the bias of any party animosities. It was a happy thought of the French authorities, as one of the means of celebrating the centennial anniversary of the taking of the Bastille, to

publish five enormous folios which contain all the correspondence, *mémoires*, drafts of treaties, and documents to be found in the government collection concerning the part taken by France in achieving our independence. It was one of the great features in the celebration of that important event. This work is called "*Histoire de la participation de la France à l'établissement des États Unis d'Amérique.*" It was arranged and edited by M. Henri Doniol, Correspondant de l'Institut, "Directeur de l'imprimerie nationale." It may well be said of M. Doniol that he has rendered an "international service to France and America by the publication of this admirable work." Some of these documents have been in former days copied for the use and under the direction of Messrs. Sparks and Bancroft, but to future historical students this unfolding of the nature of the participation of France in our struggle, by which the whole story of her connection with the Revolution is told, gives us a knowledge of the history of that time for which we look in vain elsewhere, and which may well force us to change our views on many points heretofore supposed to have been irrevocably settled.

This monumental work, which is, we doubt not, to be the great storehouse of facts on the subjects upon which it treats, was very properly given to the world on the centennial anniversary, as we have said, of the capture of the Bastille, July 14, 1789. It was intended as a trophy of what France had done for liberty in the history of the world. The day of the anniversary was of course the occasion of a great national festival (like the secular games of Rome), and thoughtful men in that country were never more proud of her national reputation than when she could prove by such a publication, without vain boasting, that she had done so much work in bringing into being one of the great powers of the world.

This book is undoubtedly the great authority for the facts which go to make up our knowledge of our relations with France during the Revolution, and the documents it presents us with should be regarded as conclusive in the

statements they make. It is a most fortunate circumstance that it has already been brought into most useful service by Mr. Tower in his life of La Fayette while he was in the American service. It helps to explain his career as no documentary evidence has yet done. His motives, so far as they can be understood by written documents, and, in short, the nature of the acts and motives of France in this business, and especially the history of her co-operation with La Fayette, throw a light upon a very dark chapter in our history. Mr. Tower has some peculiar qualifications for work of this kind. An early fondness for and study of American history, stimulated by the investigation of the original sources abroad, where for a number of years he was completing his education, his familiarity with modern languages, and his opportunity of constant intercourse with literary men have no doubt made him feel that this great gift of the French government should be made use of to show that we have not forgotten what France did for us in the day of trial, and how the interests of France and the liberty and independence of America became welded together in the fiery furnace of the Revolution. Mr. Tower has not neglected other sources of information, of course, when it was necessary to fill out the portrait of La Fayette; but, after all, his chief reliance is upon that of M. Doniol, and the consequence is that in all cases where he seeks for evidence in the "Participation," nothing can be fuller, more complete, and in every way more satisfactory than the conclusions which he arrives at. Indeed, one cannot go far in reading his book without coming to the conclusion that Mr. Tower is eminently of a judicial temper, a quality perhaps never more necessary than when he has to do with enthusiasts who kept up the popular feeling in France, most of whom were disciples of Rousseau and the Encyclopædists, of whom La Fayette was never one. There can be no doubt that had he answered to the popular idea of a Frenchman he would have met with no success in his expedition, and nothing is more remarkable than the manner in which he adapted his conduct to the simple purpose, not of gaining any new liberties

for the Americans, but of preserving those that had been their inheritance as Englishmen. He gained the good will and co-operation of his fellow-soldiers because he advocated no theories which were not in harmony with their ideas of self-government. It is true that La Fayette was not one of those officers who burned to avenge France and himself because an ignominious treaty had been forced upon his country by England in 1763, still less that he came to gain distinction as a military adventurer in this country. His great wish was to serve near the person of Washington. He knew America, young as he was, better than the Comte de Broglie did, and had no desire to establish here a Stadtholderate for himself and to supersede Washington in command.

Mr. Tower, with all his painstaking and conscientious labor and his great familiarity with the history of the era, in France especially, does not throw much light upon the long-vexed question, What was the overpowering motive which induced La Fayette to leave his country at the time he did to come over and help us? La Fayette, in acknowledging the commission of major-general, tells Congress that he considered the cause of the United States that of honor, virtue, and universal happiness. There is no difficulty in discovering the nature of the errand of the French officers who were the companions of La Fayette in his ship which brought them here in June, 1777, for the history of the time is full of their complaints about rank and pay and the non-observance of the contract made with them by Mr. Deane in Paris on behalf of Congress. But it is very clear that La Fayette was not, like these gentlemen, a military adventurer; indeed, it is quite certain that he, of all the Frenchmen who entered our service, could say at its expiration, as he had done when he made the agreement with Deane in 1776, that he proposed to serve "the United States with all possible zeal, without any pension or particular allowance." The commissioners, Dr. Franklin and Mr. Deane, in a letter to Congress of 25th May, 1777, speak of him as "a young nobleman of great family connexions here

and of great wealth, who has gone to America in his own ship to serve in our armies." They say nothing of his patriotic ardor and love of the human race, so commonly regarded by French writers as essential to a great hero. In the absence of any other motive assigned for leaving his young wife and the other members of his family, his disobedience to the order of the King, and his abandoning all hope of military promotion at home, we are inclined to think, judging from his subsequent history, that the motive which he assigned for his conduct was the grand and noble, yet simple and prosaic, one of devotion to public duty. He landed, as is well known, after a long voyage, on the coast of Carolina, and from thence he pursued his long and toilsome way by land to Philadelphia. On his arrival, he and his companions were much surprised and discouraged by the reception they met with. Mr. Deane, the officers were told, had gone far beyond his instructions in making contracts with those who desired to enter the American service, especially by attempting to provide commissions in our army for them. The position of Congress was one of great delicacy and difficulty. It was embarrassed by Mr. Deane's promises, not merely because no new officers were needed, but also because their appointment in accordance with the promise made by Deane would make them outrank the American officers, who from the beginning had borne the burden and heat of the day, and who were in most cases quite as competent for their work as those who sought to supersede them. Besides, although La Fayette professed his disinterestedness, yet Congress could not shut its eyes to the fact that he was, after all, only a runaway French officer, whose appointment in our army might produce at the Court of France a most unfavorable impression at a time when we were negotiating for a close alliance with that power. Then, in addition to all this, it was not the practice to make men major-generals who were but nineteen years old, and who, of course, had had no military experience. We were then, it must be remembered, absolutely dependent for our military supplies

upon France, and they had been purchased in that country for us by Mr. Deane. Deane was not only our purchasing agent, but he assumed to be to a large number of French officers who desired to enter into our service authorized to issue military commissions to them. As he had received no such instructions from our government and no authority from France to confer these commissions in that country, his heedless conduct had to be disavowed. We had probably discovered how small a matter might derange all our calculations at that time. Vergennes, who had always been our friend, had in the summer of 1776 gone so far as to induce Spain, under the obligations of the Bourbon family compact, openly to join in an alliance with France to aid us by declaring war with Great Britain, and even to contribute a million of livres towards helping us; but the news arriving of the loss of the battle of Long Island, the whole scheme collapsed, and the next document which we find in regard to the relations of France and Spain to Great Britain shows by what a slender thread we were bound to them. It is at the same time, perhaps, one of the most curious specimens of diplomatic lying in history. It is a note from Vergennes to the British ambassador in Paris.

SIR,—I am deeply touched by the attention of your Excellency in permitting me to share with you the joy you feel at the happy news of the successes of the British arms in Connecticut and in New York. I beg your Excellency to accept my thanks for this proof of friendship, and my sincere congratulations upon an event so likely to contribute towards the re-establishment of peace in that quarter of the globe.

* * * * *

I am, &c.,

DE VERGENNES.

Under circumstances such as these Congress may well have been embarrassed, and the members who tried to speak French with La Fayette's companions were certainly not cordial; but it seemed that there was no alternative, and the extraordinary step was taken, July 31, 1777, of making a boy of nineteen years of age a major-general, in

"consideration," as the resolution stated, "of his zeal, illustrious family, and connections." It is true that in order to save appearances the appointment was called an honorary one. Kalb and his other friends at first sought commissions in vain, but within a short time, probably at the earnest request of La Fayette himself, Kalb was made a major-general, his commission bearing the same date as that of La Fayette. There seems to have been a certain fascination about La Fayette at this time which carried beyond the bounds of prudence in this matter the members of the Continental Congress. Even Washington himself does not seem to have escaped the contagion of that sympathy which everywhere surrounded him. The first time he saw him he treated him as his own son, and begged that he would make the quarters of the Commander-in-Chief his home. Nothing is more curious and interesting about this book of Mr. Tower than the new light which his account of the relations between Washington and La Fayette throws upon the characteristics of the former. To him Washington does not appear as the cold, reserved, dignified personage whom he is justly represented to be in his intercourse with others. In every letter which he writes to La Fayette the gentle, affectionate, and tender side of his nature is most conspicuous, and La Fayette received it all with a loving, filial reverence which showed how he valued the absolute confidence which the great chief reposed in him. All his letters breathe the same spirit. Indeed, the affectionate relations between Washington and La Fayette, continuing without a break for nearly a quarter of a century, seem unparalleled in the history of the former's life.

At this time (August, 1777) Washington was about to begin at Brandywine the campaign which ended at Monmouth. It was on his way to the battle of Brandywine that Washington first saw him, and he served there as a volunteer, but without any command. In an attempt to rally the fugitives from that field he was wounded in the leg. The incident is principally remarkable for the tender care with which Washington caused him to be looked after

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at Bethlehem, whither he had been transferred, and where his convalescence was tedious.

It is impossible to give here a detailed account of all the acts of gallantry by which he gained distinction during this campaign. One result followed which gratified the young man's ambition. By reason of his conspicuous good conduct his command was exchanged from a nominal to a real one. His services are thus spoken of in a letter from Washington to Franklin, introducing him on his return, on furlough, to Paris. "The generous motives," he says, "which first induced him to cross the Atlantic, the tribute which he paid to gallantry at Brandywine, his success in Jersey before he had recovered from his wounds, in an affair where he commanded militia against British grenadiers (Gloucester), the brilliant retreat by which he eluded a combined manœuvre of the whole British force in the last campaign (Barren Hill), his services in the enterprise against Rhode Island, are such proofs of his zeal, military ardor, and talents as have endeared him to America and must greatly recommend him to his Prince." In all these actions there is to be observed a growing attachment to the cause of the United States and an increasing capacity and desire to serve them. The period during this campaign in which he was able to show his zeal in their service was hardly more than a year; and the man who did this work of which Washington speaks had not reached his twenty-first year. Our army at that time had many officers of high rank who were of foreign birth; but what a contrast there is between the arrogant pretensions and scarcely concealed treason of such men as Gates, Charles Lee, Conway, and other conspirators, and La Fayette! He was subjected to the greatest degree of discomfort during the campaign, and, what was far worse, to the insulting conduct of Sullivan towards the French auxiliaries under D'Estaing; but nothing cooled his enthusiasm or swerved him from the plain path of duty.

At the end of the campaign of 1778, La Fayette obtained leave of absence, and returned to France with the double purpose of seeking pardon for the offence he had committed in

quitting the kingdom against the orders of the King, and of striving to help forward the cause of the colonies. Although the Congress and the army were loath to part with him, there was a strong conviction that he could induce the French government to lend us money and help us with supplies, although, strange to say, no re-enforcements of troops were asked for. It is strange that while every one felt the greatest confidence in La Fayette, the conduct of the French troops brought by D’Estaing had not been such as to lead us to desire that any more auxiliaries of that kind should be sent us.

We are inclined to look upon La Fayette in the year 1779 as quite as much of an American minister in France as was Dr. Franklin; and that implies what may appear a somewhat extravagant estimate of his services. He was, of course, received in his own country as a national hero, not merely by the liberal party, but by all who were distinguished by rank or power in the kingdom. It was necessary that he should be forgiven by the King for his disobedience in going to America before appearing at Court; but the *douce réprimande* which he received was in ludicrous contrast with the enthusiasm which his presence and his account of the American war everywhere excited. He soon became the chosen adviser of De Vergennes as to the mode of carrying on the war, and to him we owe perhaps more than any one else that measure which sent to our aid, under Rochambeau, a second body of nearly five thousand troops adequately supported by a large fleet.

One of the many excellent qualities in Mr. Tower’s book is the orderly manner in which he arranges in due course of time the services of La Fayette. We have seen what he did for us on the battle-fields of 1777–78, and we now come to what may be properly called his diplomatic work in France during the year 1779,—a work which in the end resulted in gaining us the all-powerful aid of France and practically terminated the war. We are not to forget that the same qualities in La Fayette which inspired confidence

in Washington—his honesty, truthfulness, earnestness, and courage—were precisely those which won over De Vergennes to the great scheme which he had in contemplation when he sent out the expedition of Rochambeau to our assistance. La Fayette reached France in February, 1779, and he lost no time nor any opportunity of urging the claims of the Americans in the proper quarters to so great a degree that we observe that Mr. Tower is of opinion "that during this year his enthusiasm and his ceaseless representations" in our behalf before the Cabinet and the King kept the cause of the American Revolution alive in France. He brought together and set in "operation all the forces that could be exerted in our favor; he filled men's minds with his own enthusiasm; he intensified the hatred of his countrymen against England; he invoked the glory of France; he appealed to the most effective impulses of his people, always with one object in view,—to send help to America." He was soon appointed, through the influence of the Queen, to the command of a regiment in the King's service, and for several months he was in constant association with De Vergennes, aiding him in making arrangements for the second expedition. It would seem that La Fayette had some expectation that he would be appointed to the command of this army; but his youth, as well as his comparatively low rank in the French army, did not permit the authorities to place him, according to French military traditions, in such a position. Rochambeau was a veteran and a thorough disciplinarian, and the result of the campaign fully justified his selection. This was only one of the many occasions on which La Fayette took an active part in the effort to weaken the power of England, although it cost him constant self-denial and the sacrifice of his pretensions as a soldier. During the year 1779 an attempt was made by the French authorities to foment a rebellion in Ireland as well as to organize on a grand scale a scheme for the invasion of England. For this latter purpose a large army had been collected in Normandy, which was to be conveyed to England, a formidable combined fleet of France and Spain

serving as an escort to the expedition. Both of these schemes (in which La Fayette acted as *aide maréchal-général des logis*, or quartermaster-general) came to naught, and then the important expedition of Rochambeau was made ready for embarkation. The suggestion that this army should be sent came from Vergennes, although Congress had not asked for a re-enforcement of French troops, for reasons which have been already given.

The instructions given to the Count de Rochambeau for the conduct of this expedition, and especially for his constant co-operation with the troops of Washington, were prepared by La Fayette. If the re-enforcement which the French sent us at that time was of any real service in the campaign which culminated in the successful siege of Yorktown, if the commander particularly showed special wisdom in following the instructions which directed him to put his forces under the immediate command of Washington, the credit is chiefly, we should never forget, due to La Fayette, whose influence was based on the knowledge of the Americans which he had acquired during his residence in this country and to his determination to avoid the causes of irritation which had made D'Estaing's effort to help us a failure. But he was not satisfied with warning Rochambeau of the possibility of being embarrassed in his operations by the absence of sympathy on the part of the Americans. On this point the French general was made fully aware of the obstacles he had to encounter. La Fayette determined to return to America and to use to the utmost his influence for the success of the expedition; to employ not only all his zeal, but all the skill which he had acquired by experience, for disabusing the Americans of the prejudices which they would certainly feel when called to act in co-operation with the French. He reached Boston in April, 1780, and at once sought the General-in-Chief, who was then encamped at Morristown. The character of the re-enforcements soon to arrive, and the determination of the French government to place them completely under the control of Washington (the suggestion of La Fayette), as

well as the general disposition of the King and the ministry in regard to the aid they were to give us, must have been particularly grateful to Washington at that gloomy time, when our domestic resources seemed so badly managed that we had nearly reached the point of exhaustion. At that time, as La Fayette said in a letter to President Reed, of Pennsylvania, "An army reduced to nothing, that wants provisions, that has not one of the necessary means to make war! Such is the situation wherein I found our troops, and however prepared I might be for this unhappy sight by our past distresses, I confess that I had no idea of such an extremity." La Fayette was sent by Washington, as a most confidential agent and interpreter of his wishes, to Rochambeau and the Chevalier de Ternay, with instructions that the fleet should leave Newport at once and endeavor, in co-operation with his own forces, to reduce New York. But he found the French fleet blockaded by Admiral Graves at Newport, and of course the French commander was unable to follow these instructions. The English having abandoned their plan of reconquering Rhode Island, however, an effort was made to secure the co-operation of the French in an attack on New York. The result was that, notwithstanding all the efforts of La Fayette to accomplish this object, it was found impossible to secure the aid of the French squadron and troops, and hence it was found necessary for the time to abandon the project.

All this disappointment, as the only result so far of the intervention of France, it was hard for both La Fayette and Washington to bear patiently, but they were men neither of whom ever permitted himself to despair of the republic. La Fayette was soon appointed to the command of a body of choice troops, who were sent to the tide-water rivers of Virginia in order to capture Arnold, who had been sent there on what was apparently a simple marauding expedition, and whose capture appears at all times to have been the most burning desire of Washington's heart. While this expedition was in preparation, La Fayette, never inactive, was urging Vergennes to send the Americans the

money of which they were so sorely in need, and commending John Laurens, the agent of Congress, to the favorable reception of the French cabinet. He at last embarked his troops at the Head of Elk; but here again the jealousy or inactivity of the French squadron under Des Touches defeated his plans. He was so long in reaching the entrance of Chesapeake Bay that he was unable to succor La Fayette's expedition against Arnold. A serious engagement between the fleets had so much injured both that neither could much aid the land forces until they were repaired. La Fayette was then directed again to march into Virginia, this time not merely to protect that State against the *raids* made by the enemy, but also to succor General Greene, who was then retiring before Cornwallis. It was utterly impossible for his small army to take the field until the men were properly clothed; but such was the penury of the treasury, and such the disinterested patriotism of La Fayette, that he borrowed in Baltimore for the public service two thousand guineas, giving his private obligation to return the money. At this very time of extreme distress it may be said that Louis XVI. had agreed to advance to the United States six millions of *livres tournois*, and to direct the Comte de Grasse, in command of the French squadron in the West Indies, to cruise off the coast of America during the next autumn. It was hoped that this fleet, co-operating with the other forces in that region, would interrupt the communication between the British forces in Virginia and their squadron at New York. Little could La Fayette or any friend of independence feel that when he was setting out on his Virginia expedition he was entering upon the beginning of the end of the American war.

One of the most valuable portions of Mr. Tower's book is his description of this campaign in Virginia. It is impossible here to follow him into all the details of La Fayette's operations, but this minute and accurate account of his wearisome marches with a very inadequate force, his main object being rather to defeat the plundering schemes of the enemy than to bring him into action, proves, if any

proof was needed, how competent La Fayette was at that time to be placed in charge of an independent command. His movements, delineated upon clear and admirable maps, can be traced in Mr. Tower's book from day to day without difficulty. At no time, even after he was joined by Wayne with his eight hundred Pennsylvanians, did his force exceed a greater number than two thousand effectives; yet with this little army he succeeded in driving Cornwallis to Yorktown, where the French army and the French fleet, at last in co-operation with our forces, cut him off from all succor and forced him to surrender.

The details of these marches and countermarches through the swamps and forests of Virginia are extremely well described. It is true that La Fayette failed in his efforts to prevent the junction of Cornwallis and Arnold at Petersburg; that he was obliged to evacuate Richmond, which soon afterwards was burned by the enemy; that he found it impossible to collect for his assistance any large body of Virginia militia; still, he persisted in actively pursuing the predatory bands of the enemy and harassing the small parties of his troops which were sent on expeditions to destroy the military stores. His letters are full of his desire that he should be soon joined by Wayne, and his firm conviction evidently was that with their united force they could soon bring to a close the partisan warfare waged by Cornwallis in Virginia. He little knew that at this very time Wayne was striving to gather together at York, Pennsylvania, the regiments with which he was ordered to help him, in the face of difficulties almost insuperable; that he was surrounded by mutinous soldiers incensed beyond endurance because neither the pay nor the clothing which had been promised them on their enlistment had been provided, and that before he could reduce his soldiers to discipline he had been forced to hang several of the mutineers. In the mean time, of course, disaster overtook the troops of La Fayette; but what else was to be expected when the enemy outnumbered him so greatly? Wayne finally joined him on the south side of the Rappahannock, on the 10th of June, with three Pennsylvania

regiments and a detachment of artillery consisting of six field-pieces. As soon as he was joined by Wayne's troops he marched to the south and put an end to the kind of warfare in which the enemy had been engaged. As Mr. Tower says, "It was the presence of La Fayette with his little band which interrupted the destruction of public stores and disappointed Cornwallis in the results of his expedition. It was the presence of La Fayette, with his cautious movements, his never-failing watchfulness, his soldierly conduct, and his skill in manœuvring in the face of his antagonist, which prevented the complete subjugation of the country." As soon as he was joined by Wayne, Cornwallis seemed to have changed places with him, evacuating Richmond, and keeping down the Peninsula towards Williamsburg, followed closely by the Americans. The skirmishes along this route were frequent, and, if they did nothing else, they made vain the boast of Cornwallis that he had conquered Virginia. Wayne's men, and particularly Butler's regiment, seem to have had their full share of the glory reaped on these occasions. The battle of Green Spring, fought on the 6th of July, was the most formidable engagement between Cornwallis and La Fayette during the campaign, and it shows to what perfection of discipline the Marquis had brought his Continental troops during the wearisome marches of the last few months in Virginia. La Fayette followed closely on the rear of the British force to Williamsburg, and it was soon reported that Cornwallis was about to cross the James River, or rather that a large portion of his force had already done so. Under this impression a detachment of the American army was sent forward under General Wayne to reconnoitre the position of the rear-guard, and if occasion offered to attack it. This detachment had driven in some outlying parties of cavalry next the pickets, when La Fayette, to assure himself of the nature of the force he was about to attack, reached by a circuitous route a hill, from the summit of which he discovered the whole British army arrayed in line, the force in front of Wayne constituting only a

small portion of it. He returned instantly to Wayne with this information, and found him hotly engaged with the advance-guard and the whole British force coming on to aid them. The flanks of the Americans were already turned, and they were in imminent danger. It was then that Wayne, with his gallant Pennsylvanians commanded by Butler, Harmar, and Stewart, "with the instinct of a leader and the courage of a lion," determined to advance and charge, although the enemy's troops numbered five times as many as his own. He succeeded so far as to escape the consequences of such a surprise, and retreated across the swamp, where his command joined the militia who had not been in the combat.

This charge at Green Spring has always been looked upon as, next to the assault at Stony Point, the most brilliant example of the characteristics of Wayne's military genius. He was, it must be remembered, in no way responsible for being so near the British army as it turned out that he was. While his superior officer, La Fayette, was reconnoitring, he was confronted by what all supposed to be a small force, but which proved to be the whole British army. Under the circumstances he was forced to surrender or to charge, and charge he did on his own responsibility and without orders. Certainly the glory of La Fayette rests on too solid a foundation to make it necessary to ascribe to him in any way the credit which may be due to this wonderful exploit of Wayne.

We have no room to enlarge upon the anxieties caused during this eventful summer by the fear that Cornwallis, who had reached Portsmouth in safety, might give further trouble by an attack on some point where he was least expected. Meantime the British commander, under the orders of Sir Henry Clinton at New York, had taken post at Yorktown, and La Fayette's heart was gladdened by the arrival of the fleet of the Comte de Grasse and the confidential message from Washington that he, with the army of Rochambeau, would march to Virginia, and, in co-operation with the French fleet and the troops which it had

brought and La Fayette's war-worn veterans, share in the glory of the siege of Yorktown, by which the war, it was hoped, would be brought to a close.

The plans of Washington for the co-operation of the French forces with his own proved successful, his army, accompanied by the French troops under Rochambeau, having reached the mouth of the James River, where they were met by a portion of the French fleet from Newport and the West India squadron under the Comte de Grasse, with more than three thousand troops under Saint-Simon and the troops under La Fayette. Cornwallis found himself completely entrapped at Yorktown, and, after trying to make a resistance,—hopeless from the first,—surrendered. With the surrender at Yorktown, La Fayette's military services to the United States ceased, and the first chapter of one of the most eventful lives of the past century was brought to a close. We must leave him here in all the fulness and freshness of the fame he had acquired in aiding to bring into existence the youngest and not the least powerful of the great nations of the world.

And we cannot close without congratulating all students of American history that Mr. Tower has set the example which they have long looked for with hopeless desire,—that of a man who knows how history should be written, and who does not shrink from the labor of going to the original sources of the story which he has to tell.

